

LOWTHER, ROBERT D. (DR.) INTERVIEW #8304

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BIOGRAPHIC WORK  
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
Indian-Pioneer Hist. subject for Oklahoma

LOWTHER, ROBERT D. (DR.)

INTERVIEW.

#8304.

Field Worker's name Hazel H. Haraldson,

This report made on (date) April 6, 1937.

1. Name Dr. Robert D. Lowther,

2. Post office Address Norman, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) 502 S. Crawford

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month December Day 3 Year 1868

5. Place of birth Hollywood, Arkansas.

6. Name of Father Rev. J. M. Lowther Place of birth Arkansas

~~Other information about father~~ Served under General Price in Civil War.

7. Name of Mother Caroline Balch Place of birth Arkansas.

~~Other information about mother~~

~~Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached Three.~~

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Hazel H. Haralson,  
Field Worker.  
April 6, 1937.

Interview with Dr. Robert D. Lowther,  
502 S. Crawford, Norman, Oklahoma.

I was born and reared on a plantation near Hollywood, Arkansas. I attended the Hollywood Grammar and High School, graduating in 1887. I took up the study of medicine and in 1889 I entered the medical department of Arkansas Industrial University at Little Rock. After a year's study there I went to Texas and practiced for six months, coming to Cleveland County, Oklahoma, on June 3, 1890.

~~I first practiced or rather located near the present site of Robinson school but a cyclone destroyed my office-home in 1891 and I moved to Denver, also in Cleveland County.~~

~~My practice was heavy and I traveled for miles in every direction. In those days I traveled horseback with my medicine kits strapped to the saddle. Haste was generally imperative for those hardy pioneers seldom dispatched anyone for the doctor unless medical aid was urgent. I was the only doctor who would cross the treacherous~~

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Canadian River when it was filled bank to bank. A number of times I would have to swerve my horse frequently to avert an on-rush of the river but "made" it across with only the loss of my medical kit in several instances and I cut many new trails through the tall prairie grass as I relieved suffering in the homes of pioneers.

I was called on in several instances to give medical aid to outlaws and cattle thieves, wild and drunken Indians; oftentimes they would detain me until they would find that I was the "Medicine Man". Usually then the drunken Indians would make faces and act as though they were nauseated and would let me go on; occasionally, however, they were not so generous, then I would have to use some quick thinking to outwit them and get away. The trails were very narrow and every stranger was a potential enemy until the horses had rubbed by and hands were withdrawn from guns. Even then a cautious look backward was not amiss - just to be sure that a bandit would not get the draw first.

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As time passed by I changed my method<sup>of</sup>/conveyance from horseback to gig; then I rode in a two-horse buggy; then in a one-horse buggy and since then have worn out eight cars.

I have witnessed as many improvements in medical procedure. Then, the causes of diphtheria and typhoid fever were more or less mysteries, and recovery from these diseases was rare. I had forty cases of typhoid fever in 1892, at one time.

Oklahoma had its fine courageous pioneers but it was also the dumping ground of the United States, and filth and disease were very common.

In 1893 I went to Louisville, Kentucky, where I continued my medical studies in a well known college, being graduated in June of that year with the degree of Doctor of Medicine. I returned to Cleveland County and located in Norman where I have been engaged in active practice since that time.